A. PROPOSED ACTION FOR THE WINDMILL GRAZING ALLOTMENT

Who: The Peaks, Mormon Lake and Sedona Ranger Districts of the Coconino National Forest propose to…

What:

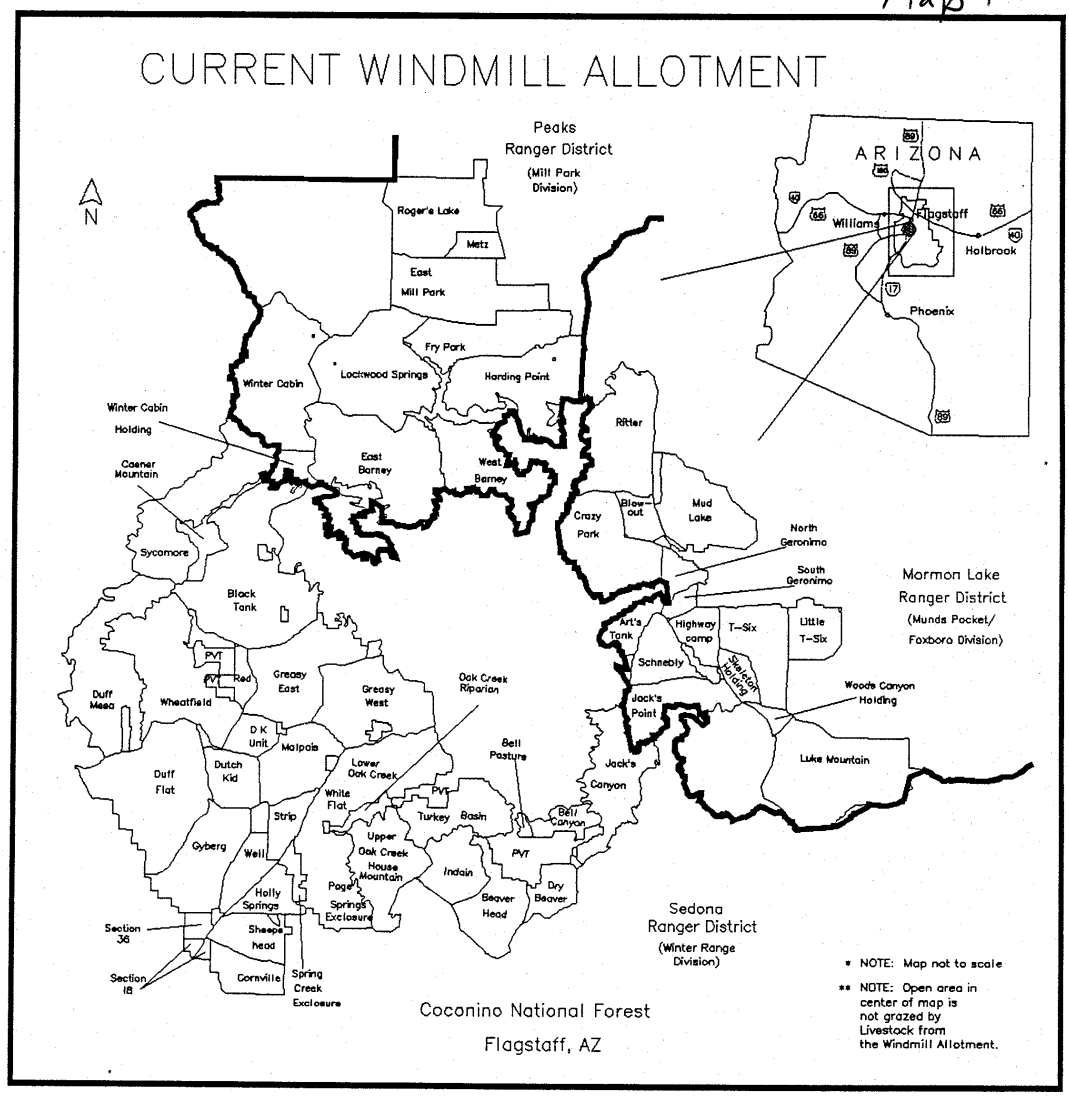
1. Define terms and conditions for livestock grazing on the Windmill Grazing Allotment. Except where noted otherwise, the responsibility to implement each action will be shared between Coconino National Forest and the permittee.

This proposal has a Forest Service permit of up to 1,097 cattle year-round on the 248,792 acres Windmill Allotment, see Map 1. This is the same number of cattle as currently permitted. An additional Arizona State Land Department permit of 160 head in the summer and 155 head in the winter is also included. To meet objectives, approximately $71,450 will be spent on structural improvements. The Forest Service will spend approximately $31,565 primarily for materials and the permittee will spend approximately $39,885 primarily for construction of the improvements. The specific improvements costs and priority are given on Table 1 and locations are shown on Map 2. These improvements are designed to reduce cattle impacts in large pastures by improving cattle distribution, reducing graze periods and increasing rest periods. A reduction in pasture size will also improve overall management by reducing time needed to gather cattle from these large and rough pastures. Annual Operating Plans will adjust cattle numbers and/or grazing rotations so cattle use is consistent with current productivity (as in drought conditions) and so plant, soil and watershed conditions can be maintained or improved while range structures are built over time.

The allotment is still divided into three main herds with an additional winter bull herd. Each main herd will use a combination of winter and summer range areas. The Mill Park herd will use areas west of 89A from Rodgers Lake to the Mogollon Rim in the summer and below the Mogollon Rim to the Verde River in the winter. The Munds-Pocket herd will use an area from the Munds Park area north along I-17 to James Canyon in the summer and southwest of Sedona and west of 89A in the winter. The Foxboro herd will use an area south of Munds Park to the Woods Canyon area in the summer and an area southeast of Sedona and east of Oak Creek in the winter. The bull herd will use an area just north of Cornville.

Utilization levels throughout the allotment will be set up to 50% by cattle and/or elk, except in Mexican spotted owl PACs. Mexican spotted owl PAC utilization will be set up to 40%. When pasture use in dry meadows, or any other area, approaches 50% by cattle and/or elk, cattle will move to the next pasture in the rotation. If elk use exceeds 50% before cattle enter a pasture, cattle will skip this pasture and move to next pasture in the rotation. Adjustments in the Annual Operating Plans would need to made if graze periods dates are adjusted more than one week. As we proceed into the new Allotment Management Plan, cattle numbers will be adjusted to meet these utilization standard.

Map 1

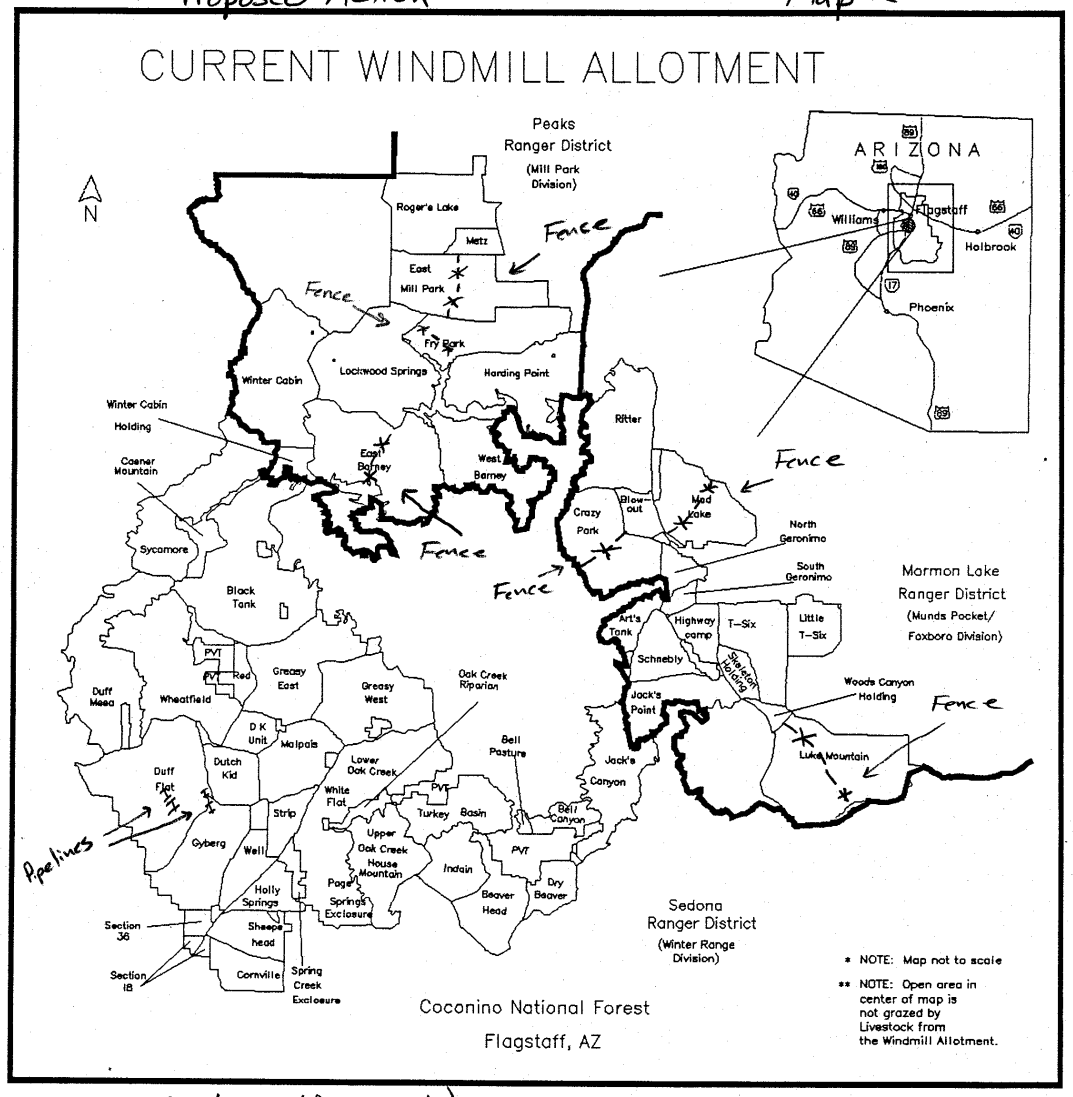

CURRENT WINDMILL ALLOTMENT
Peaks
Ranger District
(Mill Park
Division)
N
ARIZONA
Flagstaff
Williams
Holbrook
Phoenix
Roger's Lake
Metz
East
Mill Park
Fry Park
Lockwood Springs
Harding Point
Winter Cabin
Winter Cabin
Holding
Caener
Mountain
East
Barney
West
Barney
Ritter
Blow
out
Mud
Lake
Crazy
Park
North
Geronimo
South
Geronimo
Sycamore
Black
Tank
Art's
Tank
Highway
camp
T-Six
Little
T-Six
Mormon Lake
Ranger District
(Munds Pocket/
Foxboro Division)
PVT
Red
Greasy
East
Greasy
West
Oak Creek
Riparian
Schnebly
Station
Holding
Duff
Mesa
Wheatfield
Jack's
Point
Woods Canyon
Holding
D K
Unit
Malpais
Bell
Pasture
Duff
Flat
Dutch
Kid
Lower
Oak Creek
Jack's
Canyon
Luke Mountain
White
Flat
PVT
Turkey
Basin
Bell
Canyon
Strip
Upper
Oak Creek
Gyberg
Well
House
Mountain
PVT
Indian
Dry
Beaver
Page
Springs
Exclosure
Beaver
Head
Holly
Springs
Sheeps
head
Section
36
Section
18
Cornville
Spring
Creek
Exclosure
Sedona
Ranger District
(Winter Range
Division)
Coconino National Forest
Flagstaff, AZ
* NOTE: Map not to scale
** NOTE: Open area in
center of map is
not grazed by
Livestock from
the Windmill Allotment.

Proposed Windmill Allotment Improvements **Table 1**

Item	Total Costs	FS Costs	Permittee Costs	Priority
Barbwire Fence - Pasture Splits				
Mill Park Pasture, 2.5 miles, 4 cattleguards	$ 12,700.00	$ 5,850.00	$ 6,850.00	1
Fry Park Pasture, 1.25 miles, 2 cattleguards	$ 6,350.00	$ 2,925.00	$ 3,425.00	2
West Barney Pasture, 2 miles, 2 cattlguards	$ 9,200.00	$ 3,900.00	$ 5,300.00	3
Luke Mountain Pasture, 4 miles, 2 cattleguards	$ 16,800.00	$ 6,500.00	$ 10,300.00	4
Mud Lake Pasture, 2.5 miles, 4 cattleguards	$ 12,700.00	$ 5,850.00	$ 6,850.00	5
Crazy Park Pasture, 2 miles, 2 cattleguards	$ 9,200.00	$ 3,900.00	$ 5,300.00	6
Pipelines				
Skeleton Bone to Gyberg, 1/4 mile, 1 drinker	$ 1,375.00	$ 910.00	$ 465.00	7
Duff Flat - south, 3/4 mile, 1 drinker	$ 3,125.00	$ 1,730.00	$ 1,395.00	8
Totals	**$ 71,450.00**	**$ 31,565.00**	**$ 39,885.00**	

Barbwire Fence - Materials $1300, Labor $2500, Total $3800/mile
Cattleguard - Materials $650, Labor $150, Total $800
Pipeline - Materials $0.31/ft., Labor $0.35, Total $3500/mile
Drinker - $500

Proposed Action - Map 2



HH Pipelines (Proposed)

— Fences (Proposed)

The following areas and/or pastures on Forest Service lands have not been used by Windmill cattle in the last 10 years or are not scheduled for the next 10 years (acres are approximate): Sycamore Canyon (11,959 acres), Casner Mountain (1,535 acres), Winter Cabin (9,418 acres), Black Mountain (2,097 acres), Secret Mountain (7,001 acres), East Secret Mountain (2,009 acres), Munds Mountain (6,409 acres), Black Springs (3,261 acres), Turkey Basin (4,245 acres), Verde River (323 acres), Section 1 pasture (480 acres), Bell pasture (1,414 acres), Sheepshead Spring (77 acres), Oak Creek (except for three watering points) (1,416 acres), Spring Creek (except for one watering point) (76 acres), T-Six Spring (10 acres), Fain Spring (five acres), Willard Spring (five acres), Lee Spring (five acres), Rodgers Lake exclosure (238 acres), (Big Draw exclosure (three acres), Fernow exclosure (40 acres) and the Verde Valley Botanical Area (2,263 acres). Section 36 pasture (640 acres) will not be used, however, this is on State lands. The total for all these non-use areas is approximately 54,300 acres. Casner Mountain has been grazed twice for up to a week when traveling down from summer to winter range and this occasional use may continue.

Wilderness areas will only be used as travel routes to and from summer and winter range. The Foxboro Herd uses the Jacks Canyon trail to travel through the Munds Mountain Wilderness. The Mill Park Herd uses the Mooney Mountain trail to travel through the Red Rock Secret Mountain Wilderness.

The following lists are the proposed grazing schedules for each herd unit for summer and winter. These grazing schedules are given as a guide to future use; however, these schedules may be adjusted to better meet the goals of this proposal because of monitoring, weather, etc. throughout the 10-year planned period. The Annual Operating Plan is the document that may adjust livestock numbers, change of season of use, and pasture rest periods to respond to this new information.

- **Mill Park Summer Herd.** This proposal has the Mill Park summer herd grazing a maximum number of 675 head of cattle from approximately 6/9-10/15. The cattle run in a 12-pasture rest rotation grazing system. Graze periods vary from four to 29 days. When days become available during a given year, Mill and Fry Park pastures receive less use then the projected time. One to two pastures each year receive yearlong rest. Each large pasture is rested at least once every five years. *Major differences from current management: 9 to 12 pastures, graze periods reduction in Barney West pasture from 17 to 10 days, Fry pasture from 20 to a maximum of 12 days, Mill Park pasture from 26 to a maximum of 12 days.*

- **Munds Pocket Summer Herd**. This proposal has the Munds-Pocket summer herd grazing a maximum number of 250 head of cattle from approximately 6/10-10/10. The cattle run in an 8-pasture rest rotation grazing system. Graze periods vary from five to 25 days. One to two pastures each year receive yearlong rest. Each large pasture is rested at least once every six years. *Major differences from current management: 6 to 8 pastures, graze periods reduction in Ritter pasture*

from 30 to a maximum of 25 days, Crazy Park pasture from 45 to a maximum of 25 days and Mud Lake pasture from 45 to 20 days.

- **Foxboro Summer Herd.** This proposal has the Foxboro summer herd grazing a maximum number of 250 head of cattle from approximately 6/12-12/20. The cattle run in a 10-pasture deferred rotation grazing system. Graze periods vary from five to 60 days. The deferred grazing system rotates the season of pasture use from year to year. *Major differences from current management: 9 to 10 pastures, graze period reduction in Luke Mountain pasture form 45 to 26 days.*

- **Mill Park Winter Herd.** This proposal has the Mill Park winter herd grazing a maximum number of 675 head of cattle from approximately 10/15-6/8. The cattle run in a 13-pasture rest rotation grazing system. Graze periods vary from three to 37 days. Three to four pastures each year receive yearlong rest. Each large pasture is rested at least once every four years. *The only differences from current management are the pipelines in Gyberg and Duff Flat pastures. These improvements will improve cattle distribution in these pastures.*

- **Munds-Pocket Winter Herd.** This proposal has the Munds-Pocket winter herd grazing a maximum number of 250 head of cattle from approximately 10/9-6/1. The cattle run in a 5-pasture rest rotation grazing system. Graze periods vary from 12 to 81 days. One pasture each year receives yearlong rest. Each large pasture is rested at least once every four years. *No change from current management.*

- **Foxboro Winter Herd.** This proposal has the Foxboro winter herd grazing a maximum number of 250 head of cattle from approximately 12/21-6/11. The cattle run in a 6-pasture rest rotation grazing system. Graze periods vary from two to 60 days. The deferred grazing system rotates the season of pasture use from year to year. *No change from current management.*

- **Bulls.** This proposal has the bulls grazing a maximum number of 100 head. The bulls run with the cow herds except from 10/16-3/1. During this time, the bulls run in a 2-pasture deferred rotation grazing system. Graze periods vary from 56 to 60 days. The deferred grazing system rotates the season of pasture use from year to year. *No change from current management.*

2. Noxious weed treatments will be needed on the allotment over the next 10 years. Current and future populations of scotch thistle, bull thistle, Dalmatian toadflax and other noxious weeds will be pulled, cut, mowed, dug or burned to reduce future spread of these species. A threatened, endangered and sensitive species specialist will be consulted before each treatment.

3. Monitoring on this allotment over the next 10 years would include: compliance, allotment inspections, range readiness, forage production, rangeland utilization, condition

and trend, soil and riparian condition, and threatened, endangered and sensitive (TE&S) species habitat, and archeological site condition. See item 4 regarding rare species.

- Frequency and canopy cover plots and a soil condition rating will be continued or established at long term monitoring sites, in areas of concern or in areas where changes in trend are expected or needed throughout the allotment.

- Proposed management will result in no effect to cultural resources as it continues the existing condition or status quo.

- Management practices that tend to concentrate livestock will not be done on or near cultural resources.

- Implementation involving ground disturbance such as construction of range improvements, will require separate site-specific archaeological clearance prior to implementation.

4. Maintain or avoid impacts to Threatened, Endangered or Sensitive Species

- Continue permanent photo points associated with four 25 x 25 foot exclosures in MSO restricted habitat.

- Establish or continue permanent photo points within T-6 Spring, Fain Spring, Willard Springs, Oak Creek, Verde River, Spring Creek, Sheepshead Spring and Roger's Lake.

- Establish and continue permanent photo points at Dry Beaver, Jacks Canyon and Dry Creek. If cattle grazing is determined to be detrimental to the long-term health of these grazed riparian sites, grazing management will be further adjusted to reduce grazing effects or these areas will be excluded from cattle grazing.

- *Purshia subintegra* monitoring will consist of a minimum of three visits to *Purshia* populations with objective of detecting utilization before, during and after cattle grazing. If greater than 20% use by cattle on individual plants is detected (using twig length measurement method), cows will be removed from the pasture or fencing will be installed to prevent further use. U.S. Fish and Wildlife will be notified. Monitoring reports will be sent to U.S. Fish and Wildlife annually.

- All fencing that excludes livestock from designated critical habitat for flycatchers will be inspected and repaired prior to releasing cattle in those pastures, as well as following any flood events.

- Using the most recent protocol, survey the following suitable habitat for southwest willow flycatcher annually for life of permit: Sheepshead, Stagestop, Red Rock Crossing, Tapco and any potential habitat that becomes suitable during

life of permit. If suitable sites become occupied, assist and cooperate with Arizona Game and Fish Department to monitor for nesting success and cowbird parasitism. Coordinate with research personnel. Potential southwestern willow flycatcher habitat will be evaluated for progress towards suitable conditions at a minimum of once every three years.

- Cooperate and assist as possible with survey efforts on non-Forest southwest willow flycatcher occupied habitat at Tuzigoot and Tavasci. If these or other surveyed sites are determined to have breeding flycatchers, then Coconino National Forest will either initiate cowbird trapping immediately upon occupancy regardless of whether assistance can be gained from Arizona Game and Fish Department or immediately remove cattle from the Windmill pastures located within a five mile radius of southwestern willow flycatcher locations and reinitiate consultation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service with the exception of the Tavasci, Tuzigoot, and Tapco areas. In these three areas, cowbird trapping would proceed as described above or cattle will be removed from Windmill pastures located within 3.25 miles of southwestern willow flycatcher locations. This grazing buffer is based on recent cowbird research in the immediate vicinity.

- For razorback suckers, continue monitoring watershed condition and trend in the winter portion of the Windmill Allotment, as described in May 28, 1998 Biological Opinion. Two water pipelines will be extended to improve cattle distribution in the Gyberg and Duff Flat pastures. If watershed conditions are not maintained or do not improve under the proposed grazing management, the FS will review management and develop new management that does result in maintenance or an improvement to watershed conditions. Yearly reports on livestock management and monitoring will be provided to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Where: Within the Peaks, Mormon Lake and Sedona Ranger Districts on Coconino National Forest, including some Arizona State Trust lands in Coconino and Yavapai Counties. Windmill Allotment is 248,792 acres in size, lying approximately 6 miles south and west of Flagstaff angling southwest to the Verde River. It is adjacent to communities of Munds Park, Village of Oak Creek, Sedona, Clarksdale, Cottonwood, Cornville and associated communities.

When: The three Ranger Districts expect a decision by October 2000. Implementation of the decision would begin by December 2000.

B. PURPOSE AND NEED – WHY:

Action 1:

- Maintain or improve watershed and soil conditions throughout the Windmill Allotment by maintaining or improving effective ground cover vegetation and

implementing Best Management Practices (BMP's) for proper grazing use and livestock distribution.

- Move toward or maintain a desired plant community near the potential natural community, from the upper Sonoran desert grassland up to ponderosa pine grassland, with productive grass, forb and shrub understory.

- Maintain or improve forage species density, diversity and composition and emphasis cool season grass production.

- Maintain or improve habitats for all threatened, endangered and sensitive species.

- Develop a new cattle grazing management system that meets resource goals while providing opportunity to continue a viable ranching operation.

- Provide productive grasslands that support grazing wildlife populations similar to existing levels, or as described by the Arizona Game and Fish Department's current and future population guidelines.

Action 2:

- Reduce or eradicate noxious weed populations on the Windmill Allotment.

- Target noxious species with an assortment of techniques appropriate to effective control or eradication based on site-specific circumstances.

- Maintain or move toward desired plant community.

Action 3:

- Verify that actions meet our goals.

Action 4:

- Maintain and improve habitat for threatened, endangered and sensitive species.

C. DECISION TO BE MADE

Whether to not allow cattle grazing, allow current livestock use or change the lands that can be currently grazed, and in what manner.